



Hampton Mayor's Committee For People with Disabilities

NEWSLETTER



Vol. 23 No. 1

Winter 2014

Jeanne E. Smith, Contributing Editor

Winter is HERE– BE PREPARED

Several record-breaking snowstorms have covered Virginia in recent years, and winter is right around the corner again! Winter Preparedness Week is Dec. 1-7. This is the time for Virginians to get ready for bad weather by taking a few easy steps.

Get a kit. Imagine that you can't leave your home for three days. You need these basic emergency supplies:

- ✓ Three days' food that doesn't need refrigeration or electricity to prepare it
- ✓ Three days' water (a gallon per person per day)
- ✓ A battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio with extra batteries
- ✓ After you have these essentials, then add a first aid kit, supply of prescription medications, blankets and warm clothing, supplies for special members of your household, and pet items.

Make a plan. Everyone needs an emergency plan:

- ✓ Decide who your out-of-town emergency contact will be
- ✓ Where will you meet up with family members if you can't return home?
- ✓ Get a worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or on the new Ready Virginia app
- ✓ Stay informed. Before, during and after a winter storm, you should:
 - ✓ Listen to local media for information and instructions from emergency officials
 - ✓ Be aware of winter storm watches and warnings and road conditions
 - ✓ Get road condition information 24/7 by calling 511 or checking www.511Virginia.org
 - ✓ Location-specific weather watches and warnings issued by the National Weather Service
- ✓ Disaster news from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- ✓ A customizable family emergency plan that can be easily shared
- ✓ A checklist for gathering emergency supplies
- ✓ Contact information for local emergency managers
- ✓ Links to register for local emergency alerts, and more

Get more information at www.ReadyVirginia.gov.

Welcoming A New Year

By the time this letter is in your hands, the holiday season will have come and gone. Though this is belated, I hope that all of you had a very special holiday season with family and friends. Now we are ready to greet the new year, and look to exciting activities in 2014.

The committee has been busy! The Luncheon was a big success and you can read about the event in the pages that follow. While everyone was enjoying the holiday season, the committee again participated in the Holly Day Parade. As noted before, the Mayor's committee is a dynamic group and our agenda for this year is challenging. We are ready to put forth a communication plan for City Council Meetings. There is discussion and work beginning on the accessibility resource book. Committee meetings continue to focus on information sharing, as well as have actual working sessions where participants can be a part of the process to complete the goals set for this year.

Finally the Mayor's Committee Foundation is into their first year of providing grants to the community. This committee has gained so much information regarding resources for people with disabilities. We hope that through the newsletter, we will be able to share this information, so everyone may benefit. Please look in this newsletter for more information about the Autism Society of Hampton Roads as a feature.

Again, please feel free to come to our meetings and learn more about how this committee is helping our community continue to be the best place to live.

Yours,
Sue Merryfield
Chair

Merryfield.susan@egglestonservices.org

The Committee meets the 2nd Thursday of every month except July and December
from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM in the 5th floor of Hampton City Hall.

HAMPTON MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

October 24, 2013

*** Read about Award recipients. Details on pages 3 to 5 ***



RECOGNITION AWARDS FOR 2013

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Warwick Forrest Retirement Living, accepting the Award Eric Czarnatowicz. Beginning in 2001, Warwick Forrest, through their partnership with Versability Resources (formerly known as ARC of the Virginia Peninsula) has employed 7 disabled workers as dining room attendants, porter, server and maintenance, providing excellent work opportunities for individuals with disabilities in our Community. Currently, they employ an individual who has worked in the food service for the past 3 years.

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

We had 2 to recognize: Ronnie Thomas is employed by Versability Resources and works in the Electronic Recycling Department. His duties include dismantling computer CPU units and sorting the various electronic components for resale. Ronnie also assists his Supervisor in training High School students in the computer disassembly process. His contract states that Ronnie is dependable and always on time for work.

Peter Curry has been with Eggleston for 9 years—all of which he has been involved with business services, and has rarely missed a day of work. He is a tried and true employee with an uplifting attitude and a memorable smile. Pete is involved with document destruction as well as assembly work. He is always ready to try a new job and when others are lagging, you can count on Pete to pick up the pace. It is a pleasure to have Pete on the Eggleston team and we hope he will be there for a long time in the future.

HELPING HANDS AWARDS

Andrew Smith is a driver for the MV Transportation Services. Andrew not only does the job well, but also goes beyond expected services. He is always pleasant, friendly, helpful and encouraging. He is very sensitive to the needs of the disabled and seems to have a natural understanding of what is needed, especially with the blind and visually impaired.

Becky Thompson is the owner of Becky's Buckroe Florist. Becky generously donates many flower arrangements to Hampton organizations. For the 2nd year Becky had donated the beautiful fall table centerpieces that adorned our tables at the Awards Luncheon. She also donates centerpieces as prizes for the Annual "Able R US" Christmas party, the Elegant Ball and several other activities for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

HAMPTON PARKS AND RECREATION'S LEAP PROGRAM

(aka Leadership Employment Adventure Program). This summer 4 teens were hired by the City of Hampton to work with disabled youth in Hampton's Summer Camp programs. Jacqueline Keener, Callie Evans-Hurst, Janel Charlton and Nehemiah Lipford were hired and they excelled. They contributed to the disabled community by helping the camp be more inclusive. They were able to accommodate those with special needs and make camp a positive and inclusive experience for the participants, regardless of their ability level.

PHIL E. EVERHART YOUTH AWARD

was awarded to Nehemiah Lipford. This was his first year working with children with Special needs in Hampton's summer program. His contribution were exceptional. His lever of maturity and sense of responsibility made him an exceptional employee. His willingness to engage with the children and bring them comfortably into a SOCIAL SITUATION WITH POSITIVITY- WAS INCREDIBLE. He fully understood our goal and purpose.

HEAD TABLE AT 2013 AWARDS LUNCHEON

SEATED - Jeion Ward-State Delegate, Bobby Scott-Congressman, Heidi Lawyer-Director Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

STANDING - Mamye BaCote-State Delegate, John Mills-State Senator, Deacon John Mills, Jane Hobbs-Luncheon Chair, Sue Merryfield-Mayor's Committee Chair



WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of the brain. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors, aka ASD.

ASD can be associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention and physical health issues such as a sleep and gastrointestinal disturbances. Some persons with ASD excel in visual skills, music and art.

Autism appears to have roots in very early brain development. However, the most obvious signs of Autism and symptoms of autism tend to emerge between the ages of 2 and 3 years old.

Autism statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify around 1 in 88 American children as on the autism spectrum- a ten-fold increase in prevalence in 40 years. Studies also show that autism is 4 to 5 times more common among boys than girls.

Autism Speaks is working to increase awareness and investigation of these and other issues, where further research has the potential to improve the lives of those who struggle with autism.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION-- AUTISM SPEAKS

LOCALLY THE AUTISM SOCIETY, TIDEWATER, VA 6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd, Norfolk VA 23502 or by calling (757)461-4474-Option 2 for the Peninsula.

For more information about local meetings and events of the Tidewater Autism Society- be sure to read our upcoming Spring newsletter- which will be available in April (to be added to our mailing list, contact Jeanne Smith at 757-826-0762 or by email mmjeannes@cox.net).

April Is Autism Awareness Month

EMPOWERING PEOPLE, CHANGING LIVES

Since 1955, Eggleston has helped find more and better ways to help persons with disabilities lead fuller, richer lives. Eggleston finds and create opportunities for individuals to make the most of their abilities, contribute to society, and enjoy the satisfaction of working and earning their own living. Eggleston Services is dedicated to educating, training and employing individuals with disabilities. Our focus is to help individuals with disabilities gain independence, confidence and increased feelings of self-worth through on-the-job training and stable, rewarding work opportunities. We continue to grow our services through partnerships with businesses and government institutions. The programs offered by Eggleston Services benefit our participants at Home, at Work, and at Play.

Eggleston – Peninsula division, is located on a 40-acre campus in Hampton, VA. Eggleston manages operations in partnership with the Sarah Bonwell Hudgins Foundation. In addition to four group homes for residents, the Sarah Bonwell Hudgins Campus features the Jennifer S. Kincaid Education Building; the Ted Pritchard Gymnasium, as well as The Child Development Academy for both special-needs and non-disabled children aged 6 months to 5 years. Additionally, the Rufus R. Kennedy Industrial Center houses a business services center where secure document conversion and shredding are available to the community, as well as other work opportunities.

Eggleston continues to look for ways to partner with the community we are located in. If you are interested in learning more about Eggleston Services, please visit our website; egglestonservices.org. One may also contact our Peninsula division directly by calling 757-224-9680 to discuss opportunities for Eggleston as well as the community.

DISABILITY SENSITIVITY

- Think capable
- Allow the disabled person to enlighten you
- Obey handicapped parking laws
- Be open minded
- Support disability group
- Realize all disabilities are not visible
- Say disabled-NOT sick
- Educate yourself
- Look at the person NOT the disability
- Innocent curiosity is OK
- Think ability instead of disability

FAITH INCLUSION NETWORK

HAPPY NEW YEAR - It is with great pleasure that I share the information below with you. Without a doubt, Hampton Roads is making great strides in developing ministries and programs for people with disabilities in our FAITH communities. Although there is still a long way to go, it has been very encouraging to hear the ideas, progress and passion of individuals throughout the area who want to make sure their congregations are welcoming and their places of worship are accessible.

For more information contact Karen Jackson - Executive Director faithinclusionnetwork@gmail.com

www.faithinclusionnetwork.org; [facebook.com/FINhamptonroads](https://www.facebook.com/FINhamptonroads)

VersAbility Resources: New Name of The Arc of the Virginia Peninsula

Different name, same commitment to quality services

The Arc of the Virginia Peninsula has proudly served people with disabilities and their families for 60 years. As a comprehensive service provider, the organization helps people with disabilities live, work, and thrive in our community.

On October 1, The Arc of the Virginia Peninsula changed their name to VersAbility Resources. VersAbility is a fusion of Versatile and Ability. This new name reflects their growing service area and commitment to creating opportunities that highlight the abilities of citizens with disabilities.

“Our former name was hindering our business and program development activities, as people would see ‘Virginia Peninsula’ in our name and think our service area was limited,” says Kasia Grzelkowski, VersAbility Resources’ President/CEO.

“Our service area extends from the Virginia Peninsula and entire Middle Peninsula/Northern Neck to the Southside. We have 90 employees who load ships at Naval Station Norfolk, as well employees in Virginia Beach. We have offices in Hampton, Gloucester, and Norfolk. Through our success in government contracts, we have created jobs for 250 people with disabilities across the country. In 2013, we began loading ships in Hawaii, so employees from VersAbility Resources are working on the docks in Pearl Harbor. VersAbility Resources performs work in five different time zones!”

While their name has changed, their commitment to people with disabilities and their families will never waiver. VersAbility Resources has grown significantly through the years while increasing employment and other opportunities for people with disabilities. Read on for some exciting statistics about this versatile, entrepreneurial organization whose dedication to people with disabilities is an asset to our entire community.



WHERE ABILITY MEETS OPPORTUNITY

Ten Things to Know About VersAbility Resources

- VersAbility Resources supports more than 1,150 people with disabilities each year in employment, day support, community living, and early childhood programs.
- Thanks to diverse lines of business and strategic partnerships, VersAbility Resources boasts a budget of \$39 million. For every dollar donated to the organization, \$.90 goes directly to their programs that help people with disabilities achieve their dreams.
- VersAbility Resources employs 1,020 people, 55% of whom are individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities in VersAbility's employment programs earn \$5.5 million in wages and benefits annually.
- Through their Electronics Recycling program, VersAbility Resources helps businesses and individuals recycle electronics in a way that is safe for the environment while creating jobs for people with disabilities. Students with disabilities in VersAbility's Transition to Work program disassemble electronics and prepare them for recycling. You can feel safe recycling your electronics with VersAbility, as all data is destroyed according to Department of Defense standards.
- VersAbility Resources earned a \$6 million X-ray Digitization contract with Alcoa Power & Propulsion to convert 12 million X-rays into digital images. In 2013, the team in Hampton, VA digitized and recycled 5,137,554 X-rays!
- VersAbility Resources will open a full-service UPS Franchise at Fort Eustis in 2014 with the option to expand to other military bases. The store will employ 4-6 people, most of whom have disabilities. VersAbility proudly hired a Wounded Warrior to lead this project.
- VersAbility Resources has nine homes that provide a safe, supportive environment for people with disabilities. They regularly receive zero-deficiency reviews of the homes and have successfully transitioned people with disabilities out of state-run institutions into the community.
- VersAbility Resources' Early Prevention and Intervention for Children (EPIC) program prepares children with disabilities for success in school, work, and life. VersAbility provides all early intervention services in Hampton and Newport News. In the past, over 400 children and families have been served annually. This number is expected to grow to 600 in 2014. Over half of the children served are from military families.
- VersAbility Resources was honored by Inside Business Magazine in 2013 as one of the "Roaring 20's," the fastest-growing businesses in Hampton Roads in terms of employees and revenue. VersAbility was the only nonprofit on this prestigious list.
- VersAbility Resources helps businesses thrive by providing a skilled, reliable, and flexible workforce. Businesses are encouraged to partner with VersAbility on projects large and small. They offer tours of their bustling Business Services program and will show you how talented employees with disabilities can help your business prosper.

For more information or to learn how you can become involved with VersAbility Resources, visit www.versability.org or call Sarah Bowman at (757) 896-6462.

Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
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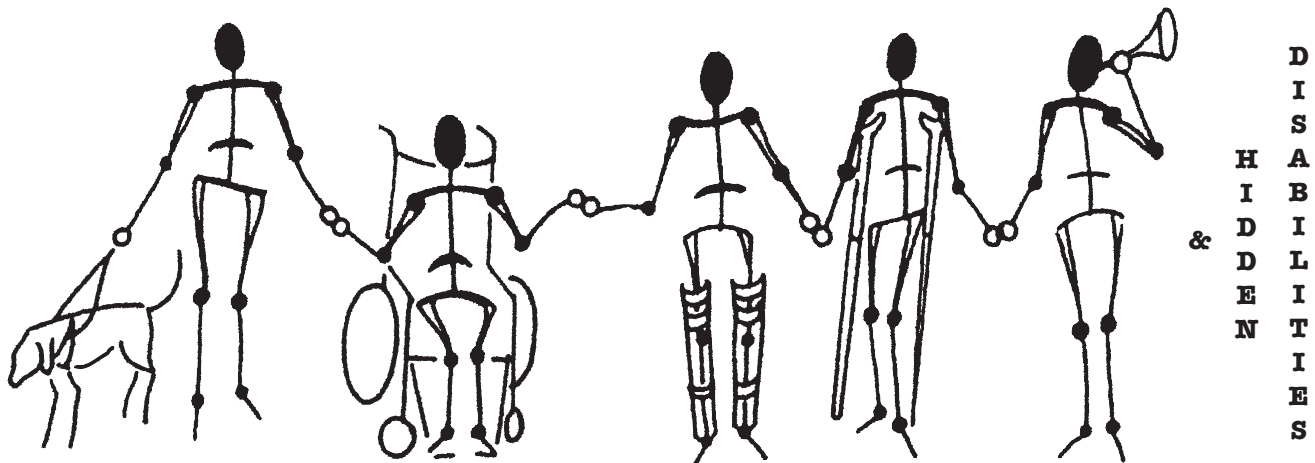
This newsletter is published quarterly, four times a year: Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. This newsletter was established to serve the disabled population and to enhance public awareness by publishing interesting and informative articles that will specifically address the needs and interests of the disabled. We welcome your comments and suggestions concerning future articles. We reserve the right to edit all articles. We are not afraid of offering controversial views for the benefit of our readers. Consequently, views and interests presented will not necessarily be the opinions of the editors or of the members of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

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for making these newsletters possible.*

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the extra copy to a friend!**

*This Newsletter is designed and printed
at **Sir Speedy** in Hampton, VA.*

*If you want to change your address, cancel receiving this newsletter or would like to be added
to our mailing list, please contact Jeanne at 757-826-0762.*



If we all work together, we can win the battle.